Chapter 9:
A Southern Cornerstone in a Subregion:
Guadalupe Mountains National Park

The expanded federal presence in southeastern New Mexico did much economically for the area north of Carlsbad Caverns National Park, but little for the trans-Pecos region to its south. Even as nuclear tests, the decline of potash mining, and changing expectations in the region made Carlsbad and the oil-rich areas to its east and north part of a new economy, just a few miles to the south older patterns of living, centered around ranching and in some cases agriculture and mining, retained their holds on regional life. The ways of living that long existed in the trans-Pecos continued well into the 1960s, largely oblivious to the changes in the national economy and even to the cultural changes that by the middle of the decade swept the nation. To visitors, even those from as close as Roswell or El Paso, the region seemed out of time, a remnant of an earlier America, lacking the issues and problems of the rest of the country. The setting evoked a seemingly better America, a happier, more unified place in which people pulled together in support of community goals at the same time as they articulated their independence. The area around the Guadalupe Mountains seemed more like what the nation once had been than what it had become.

Outside influences always had an impact on the region even before the railroad surveys of the mid-nineteenth century, and during the 1960s those influences became stronger. The remote nature of the region and its marginal economic status no longer shielded the Guadalupe Mountains from external interests. One dimension of the era's cultural change placed a growing emphasis on preserving untrammeled land from development. Reaching its pinnacle in the passage of the Wilderness Act of 1964, this movement spurred interest in places such as the Guadalupe Mountains.[1] Although much of the area was not technically eligible as federal wilderness land because of privately owned acreage eliminated the requisite 5,000-acre roadless tracts, the scenery was spectacular and few people encroached upon the region. With a strong federal presence in the larger area and the economic benefits of the tourism generated by national park status apparent, an effort to create some kind of national park area in the Guadalupe Mountains took shape.

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[1] Weldon Heald, "Looping the Guadalupes," *Travel* V. 120 no. 4 (October 1965): 34-36; Annette Richard Parent, "Guadalupe: Barrier Reef in the Desert," *National Parks* V. 48 no. 10 (October 1974): 4-9; Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983) 3rd ed., 220-26; Rothman, *The Greening of a Nation?,* 177-90.

In this effort, engineered by groups both within and outside the immediate area, the trans-Pecos once again followed typical patterns. By the 1960s, the region languished. Whatever aspirations people held for it had become stale, and an insular quality pervaded the region. The Guadalupe Mountains seemed detached from the rest of the nation, a quality that made some from outside its boundaries covet it. Atop Guadalupe Peak, environmental activist Edward Abbey observed: "This is a harsh dry bitter place, lonely as a dream. But I like it. I know I could live here if I wanted to. If I had to."[2] From the perspective of some who engaged in what had become called the "rat race" of modern life, the psychic distance between the wind-blown escarpment and the spectacular mountains peaks was a prized commodity, one they sought to protect from the potential changes that could change it.

An unusual combination of people joined in bringing a federal presence to the southern part of this subregion. President Lyndon B. Johnson stood in the forefront to galvanize advocates. He wanted to secure another national park for his home state of Texas. His powerful position in the year that followed his landslide victory over Barry Goldwater in 1964 brought the idea of a far west Texas park to the forefront of conservation politics once again. His desire for a national park in his home state created the context in which the effort could take place. Wallace E. Pratt, a Humble Oil geologist and later company vice president, served as the local catalyst. Long before Johnson's election, Pratt urged the creation of a national park in the Guadalupe Mountains that included his beloved McKittrick Canyon and his home, the Ship on the Desert. Pratt lived in two distinct worlds: the New York City world of Humble Oil's corporate offices and the rural world of McKittrick Canyon that he had first visited in the 1920s and later made his home. His ability to transcend the geographic distance between the two locales illustrated the ways in which modern transportation made even remote places accessible. J. C. Hunter Jr. and his representative, Glenn Biggs, made a significant tract of land available to the federal government and worked to assure that the government could secure its purchase. The result was the preservation of one of the most spectacular and geologically significant land forms in the national park system.

The authorization of Guadalupe Mountains National Park in 1966 added the southern cornerstone to the Carlsbad-Guadalupe Mountains subregion. The Guadalupe Mountains had always been a landmark; no matter what their designation, they marked a line between a place where people could make a living, albeit often a hardscrabble one, and where such endeavor was simply impossible. To the west of the mountains, the salt flats and a scrub desert stretched all the way to the Hueco Tanks, just east of El Paso. To the south and east stretched countless miles of arid land, infrequently divided by small streams or springs and occasional oases. In the park designation, the mountains formally received what they long possessed in local lore: a place of distinction that highlighted an important boundary between habitable acres and land that even irrigation could not harness.

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[2] Edward Abbey, "Guadalupe's Trails in Summer," *National Geographic* Vol. 156 n. 1 (July 1979): 134-41.

The park also served as harbinger of change for the people of the region. Despite the national park status, a designation that slowed change and formalized procedures in most places, in the Guadalupe Mountains, park creation accelerated the pace of transformation. The region had been so deeply static for so long that the park became a catalyst in the trans-Pecos. In this context, Guadalupe Mountains National Park was proactive, like the later Alaskan national parks derived from the Alaskan National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 (ANILCA), anticipating later demand from users. As a result, the change it created in its wake inaugurated a process that continued well beyond establishment of the park, laying the basis for a future that differed from the one anybody in the trans-Pecos anticipated.

The establishment of Guadalupe Mountains National Park came at a crucial time for the Park Service. Between park authorization in 1966 and its establishment in 1972, the Park Service and the park system underwent radical change. At its fiftieth anniversary in 1966, the agency intellectually still very much mirrored its origins; it remained committed to the complicated set of intellectual and cultural ideals that Stephen T. Mather and Horace M. Albright assembled in the 1910s. Despite significant professionalization and the rise in importance of science, large natural areas with spectacular scenery still formed a preeminent focus of agency acquisition efforts. Conrad L. Wirth and George Hartzog, Jr., who led the agency from 1953 until 1972, emphasized expanding the park system, sometime over the protests of other agency officials who remained committed to an earlier set of ideas, a foreshadowing of great change in the Park Service's responsibilities. From MISSION 66 to Parkscape USA (Hartzog's successor program to the ten-year capital development bonanza that preceded the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Park Service in 1966), the parks seemed to be changing away from being distant, revered places to becoming proximate and hands-on locales used by everyone. By 1972, the combination of social unrest and cultural turmoil precipitated the new stance. With the establishment of Gateway National Recreation Area in New Jersey and Golden Gate National Recreation Area in San Francisco, and the growing emphasis on urban parks and what would come to be called multicultural sites, the agency and its value system were in flux.[3]

In this context, Guadalupe Mountains National Park became the symbolic last traditional national park in the lower forty-eight states. Remote, expansive, and devoted largely to nature and scenery, with only specialized recreation possible, Guadalupe Mountains was conceived without the constraints of successor parks. Along with North Cascades and Redwoods national parks, both authorized the same year, Guadalupe Mountains joined the small group of the last natural national parks fashioned from lands not already included in the park system. Such parks stood out as the plethora of areas that stemmed from changing national goals and aspirations and later from the so-called "park-barreling" process, muddied the

[3] Foresta, *America's National Parks and Their Keepers*, 169-222; Sellers, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks*, 208-10.

meaning of national park system designation.[4] In the context of a changing agency and even greater alterations in what the public expected from the national parks, Guadalupe Mountains was a throwback to an earlier era.

After the failed efforts of the 1930s, the mantel of leadership for a park in far west Texas passed to Wallace E. Pratt. Originally from Phillipsburg, Kansas, and physically small at a lithe and energetic 115 pounds, the gentlemanly Pratt, the first professional geologist hired by the Humble Oil and Refining Company, was a true Renaissance man. He studied at the University of Kansas, and for him geology became "not only a means of livelihood, but quite literally a way of life." Pratt probably understood Permian-era geology better than anyone in the 1920s and 1930s, was fond of quoting Alexander Pope and Bertrand Russell, and counted the much renowned writer Joseph Wood Krutch as a close personal friend. His impact on oil exploration was only matched by his modesty. "I was lucky," he recalled. "The time just happened to be ripe for someone with my bag of tricks to come down the pike." After graduating in 1907, Pratt worked for the U.S. Bureau of Mines in the Philippines and for private industry in Central and South America. In 1918 he joined the one-year-old Humble to introduce scientific techniques to its search for oil. Within one year, he added ten geologists to the company's payroll and introduced the seismograph, which became a standard oil exploration tool, to the company. In 1921, he found the first major oil field with seismic surveying, near Sugarland, Texas, and followed it with the discovery of a major oil find in a fault zone that extended northeast from the Mexia, Texas, area. Pratt's well-equipped geologists scoured Texas and Oklahoma for sources of oil, succeeding beyond the company's wildest expectations; with nine seismographic crews in the field before the end of 1925, Humble found so much oil that it soon possessed more than twice the reserves of its nearest competitors. In 1924, Humble rewarded Pratt by making him a member of its board of directors.[5]

Pratt's infatuation with the Guadalupe Mountains began only a few years after he joined Humble. When he arrived in west Texas in 1921 to survey oil leases, a real estate agent showed him McKittrick Canyon. " It was — and is — the most beautiful spot in Texas," he told an interviewer many years later. Impressed with its beauty and the stunning geology evident in the canyon walls, Pratt and two friends purchased the property. A few years later they were surprised that Judge J. C. Hunter had purchased much of the land in south McKittrick Canyon that the trio thought they owned. Pratt and his friends received only an oral description of their purchase; Hunter looked at the surveys in the land office and acquired a gem. In the winter of 1930, after Pratt bought out his partners, he commissioned Houston architect John Staub to design a home that fit the region. The four-room house was built entirely of stone quarried from

[4] Mackintosh, *The National Parks: Shaping the System* (Washington, D.C.:National Park Service, 1985), 62-80; John Jacobs, *A Rage for Justice: The Passion and Politics of Phillip Burton* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 363-401.

[5] Amos Salvador, "Memorial," *The American Association of Petroleum Geologists Bulletin* 66 9 (September 1982): 1412-22; W. L. Copithorne, "From Doodlebug to Seismograph," 42-47.

the McComb Ranch. The Stone Cabin or *Manzanital*, after the ranch on which it was located, became the Pratt family's summer home. In 1945, a larger home, on a promontory at the base of a mountain outside the canyon and called "The Ship on the Desert," was completed. The Pratts lived there for fifteen years, without a telephone, more than ten miles from the nearest neighbor. The need for health care finally compelled them to move closer to modern amenities. The entire time, Wallace Pratt recalled, they received the news of the world over a radio receiver every morning — broadcast from Ottawa, Canada, by the Canadian National Broadcasting Agency.[6]

During his time in the Guadalupe Mountains, Pratt developed an even more pronounced appreciation for the region's beauty. Its geology had always entranced him; the visible strata in the rock inspired his initial purchase and the time he spent in the canyons enhanced his sense that the region was special. As he aged, he said later, he learned to see with new eyes and recognized not only the geological but also the aesthetic value of the land he called his own. The man who had been at best a lukewarm advocate of a national park during the 1930s became its primary proponent in the 1950s and 1960s.[7]

Pratt took the lead in shaping the contours of a national park in the Guadalupe Mountains and also assisted in the process of acquiring land. In 1958, he approached the federal government with an offer to donate his holdings in McKittrick Canyon as the basis for a national park. As 1961 ended, the federal government accepted 5,632 acres from Pratt and his family. Pratt's activities did not end with the donation. He wrote Frank Tolbert of the *Dallas Morning News*, well known for his popular nature column, "Tolbert's Texas," seeking to enlist the writer's support. He sent a copy of the letter to J.C. Hunter Jr., who owned the land that his father bought in 1925 and the family's other acquisitions. The Guadalupe Mountain Ranch, as the more than 72,000-acre property was called, was the crucial piece in Pratt's vision of a national park project. To secure it, Pratt sought a benefactor, someone who would purchase Hunter's land and give it to the Park Service. Lacking Pratt's independent means, Hunter wholeheartedly agreed with Pratt's assessment that a benefactor would make the transaction feasible. After a visit by a National Park Service team, which favorably recommended more than 27,000 of the 72,000 acres for inclusion in a park proposal, Hunter put the property on the market. At about the same time, Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall was informed of the project. Recognizing that the 45,000 acres that the Park Service did not deem suitable for inclusion created an obstacle to the purchase of the desired 27,000, Udall also began to seek

[6] Wallace E. Pratt, "Memorandum for Mr. Donald A. Dayton, Superintendent, Carlsbad Caverns and Guadalupe Mountains National Park, on Historic Structures In Guadalupe Mountains National Park, June 13, 1974, NA, Rocky Mountain Region, RG 79, SW Regional Office, General Administration Files, 1968-1970, H30, 1974-1976, GUMO.; Fabry, *Guadalupe Mountains National Park*, 29-32; Edgar and Patricia Cheatham, "The Extraordinary World of Wallace E. Pratt," *Petroleum Today* 12 2 (Summer 1971), 1-5

[7] Cheatham and Cheatham, "The Extraordinary World of Wallace E. Pratt," 1-5; W. L. Copithorne, "From Doodlebug to Seismograph," 42-47.

outside funds.[8] Different strains of momentum in support of a Guadalupe Mountains national park began to converge.

The election of Joe Pool, a freshman congressman from Texas, spurred the move for a national park. After three terms in the Texas legislature, Pool was elected as a congressman-at-large, meaning that the entire state was his district. During the campaign, he canvassed west Texas and found that the people he wanted to support him favored a national park. After his election in January 1963 — without contacting either the Department of the Interior or any of the interested parties in west Texas — Pool introduced a bill in the House of Representatives to study the area for national park status. Although the Park Service completed such a study the year before, Udall commended Pool's plan and an update of the previous year's study was undertaken. The slow legislative process worried J.C. Hunter Jr., and in dialogue with Pratt, he decided that he could not wait for the federal government to appropriate money to purchase his land. Between 1961 and 1963, Glenn Biggs negotiated with a number of potential buyers, but could not complete a transaction. Along with Pool and another Texas congressman, Ed Foreman of Odessa, Biggs continued to try to generate interest in the park, meeting with U.S. Senator Ralph Yarborough, the senior member of the Texas delegation. Others joined the growing movement, including Texas Governor John Connally and former Texas Secretary of State and Attorney General John Ben Sheppard, in 1963 president of the Texas State Historical Survey Committee. Sheppard urged his county committees to initiate resolutions in support of a national park and at the same time pushed the U.S. Highway 180 Association, made up of leaders in communities along the highway in west Texas and southeastern New Mexico, to support the project and even challenged Texaco to support the park. "I predict a big company like the Texas Company, which has made so much money in this state and taken so much of our mineral resources out of the state will cooperate," Sheppard predicted. "I don't think they'll stand in the way of the people of Texas enjoying the recreation and the scenic beauties of their land."[9] A groundswell that advocated the park emanated from west Texas and New Mexico.

To this point, the process of creating Guadalupe Mountains National Park had been

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[8] Weldon Heald, "A Guadalupe Mountains National Park," *National Parks* V. 39 (September 1965): 4-8; "Background of Wallace Pratt Land Donation: Notes Taken from Land Files at Carlsbad Caverns National Park," Guadalupe Mountains National Park Library, VF, Planning Documents, Box not labeled; Fabry, *Guadalupe Mountains National Park*, 32-37.

[9] "Commissioners Endorse Guadalupe Park Proposal," *El Paso Herald-Post,* July 29, 1963; *"Dell City Council Boosts Guadalupe Park Proposal," El Paso Herald-Post*, August 10, 1963; "State Park Planners Eye Guadalupe Area as Site," *El Paso Herald-Post*, August 21, 1963; "Texas Governor Favors Guadalupe National Park," *National Parks* V. 38 (March 1964): 16; Charles H. Callison, "National Capital Report: Conservation Outlook," *Audubon* V. 67 (January/February 1965): 25 "Mineral Rights Top Park Talks," *El Paso Times*, July 21, 1965; Paul Mason Tilden, "Washington Newsletter," *Natural History* V. 74 (August/September 1965): 62; "Sheppard Thinks State Will Drop Mineral Rights for Guadalupe Park," *San Angelo Standard-Times*, May 28, 1966; Monte L. Monroe, "Glenn Biggs and His Crusade for a Guadalupe Mountains National Park," (unpublished paper, 1992), VF Box: history general Folder # 1609, Guadalupe Mountains National Park; Fabry, *Guadalupe Mountains National Park*, 42-45.

typical of the way national parks entered the park system — prior to the first four decades of the twentieth century. Normally community and regional leaders, the movers and shakers in the comfortable phrase of the time, tapped their political, social, and economic connections. The role Wallace Pratt undertook was a reprise of that played in other situations by similar people. From John Muir at Yosemite National Park and Enos Mills at Rocky Mountain National Park to Laurence Rockefeller at National Park, a prominent and usually wealthy figure with strong ties to the region but from outside its borders almost always played a catalytic role in creating the momentum that established the park. On the surface, the process that Guadalupe Mountains followed seemed very similar.[10]

What was different was the political, social, and economic climate of the 1960s. In some ways, the time made creating a new national park a far easier task. In an optimistic nation, full of the sense that it could solve social problems such as poverty once and for all, and with remarkable affluence spread up and down the socioeconomic ladder, anything was possible. A society that set as a goal the eradication of diseases such as smallpox for all time could conceive of anything. A national park seemed as if it were simply frosting on a rich cake, a *coupe de grace* that illustrated not only the wealth of the nation but its potent moral fiber as well. The attention Congress showed the national parks assisted as well. In the throes of MISSION 66, when individual representatives and senators competed to offer the Park Service even greater resources for capital development each year, a national park not only symbolized cultural greatness, it also became a source of revenue for states fortunate enough to receive one. Lyndon Johnson, who made his reputation bringing home federal projects to Texas, was in the White House and had counterparts in Congress. Hard-nosed U.S. senators such as Clinton P. Anderson of New Mexico and Alan Bible of Nevada — always on the lookout for federal development dollars for their states — and representatives such as Wayne Aspinall of Colorado — a proponent of economic development projects but a staunch opponent of the Wilderness Act — fueled the charge for new projects. No self-respecting elected state official wanted to watch the opportunity to bring federal dollars into their district or state slip away. A boom in national park area establishment followed.[11]

Despite the enthusiasm that accompanied the effort to proclaim a Guadalupe Mountains National Park, there were circumstances that complicated the situation. The federal government had begun to exercise much greater oversight than earlier in the century, especially in environmental affairs. This move began with antipollution legislation, typically aimed at water and

[10] Stephen Fox, *John Muir and His Legacy: The American Conservation Movement* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1981); Robin Winks, *Laurence S. Rockefeller* (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 1997).

[11] Paul Brooks, "Congressman Aspinall *vs.* The People of the United States," *Harper's* v. 226 no. 1354 (march 1963): 60-63; Richard Alan Baker, *Conservation Politics: The Senate Career of Clinton P. Anderson* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1985), 106; "'Unspoiled Areas' U.S. Wants for Parks," *U.S. News and World Report* V. 60 no. 7 (February 14, 1966): 76-77.

air pollution, and it soon extended into other areas. After the publication of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* in 1962, and with Stewart Udall, the author of the influential *The Quiet Crisis*, an analysis of the precarious environmental situation of the nation, in the secretary of the interior's chair, federal agencies and congressional committees closely scrutinized proposed activities in a prelude of attention. This culminated in the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), the authorizing legislation for the environmental revolution.[12] Increased attention cut both ways.

Yarborough recognized the opportunity the Guadalupe Mountains situation provided and he sought to capitalize upon it. In early November 1963, as the Park Service and many of the supporters of a park moved toward their goal, Yarborough raised the stakes by introducing S. 2296, a bill to create Guadalupe Mountains National Park. Pool, recognizing that a more experienced and influential official circumvented him, tried to save face with the introduction of H. R. 9312, which he called the "official Interior Department measure," on December 2, 1963. Two days later Yarborough revised his proposal to standardize the geographical boundaries of the two bills.[13] With pending legislation, Congress could begin to assess the proposal's viability.

Enormous obstacles still stood between the proposals and a national park in the Guadalupe Mountains, and the largest of them remained the question of the Guadalupe Mountains Ranch. Hunter wanted fair market value for his property. After failing to find a benefactor to purchase the property and donate it as parkland, he recognized that federal appropriations were necessary. Tax dollars would have to be spent to "throw away money to make someone a millionaire," as U.S. Representative Julia Butler Hansen of Washington, chairwoman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee, described the situation when it came to her committee in 1967, a prospect that seemed a daunting barrier. Issues of mineral rights also had to be resolved. Although Pratt once told Hunter to retain at least a share of his mineral rights when the land sold, in front of the House subcommittee he indicated that the area was likely bereft of oil and gas. Whether Pratt recognized that a national park that included private mineral rights would be less desirable or whether he genuinely thought the area lacked potential remains unclear, but representatives of Texaco, Inc., which held mineral leases for more than 25,000 acres of Hunter's land, argued for continued exploration. Congressman Richard White of El Paso, the sponsor of the bill, also testified, supporting the idea of the park, but he preferred that the state of Texas retain its mineral rights to the school section. The prospect of the great wealth that emanated from the Permanent University Fund (PUF) to the east, a gift to the state university by Haymon Krupp, an El Paso oil entrepreneur and one of the most successful of the first generation of west Texas wildcatters, was enough to persuade Texans to remain cautious in their generosity to any park project.[14]

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[12] Rothman, *The Greening of a Nation*

[13] Fabry, *Guadalupe Mountains National Park*, 45-46.

[14] Charles H. Callison, "National Outlook," *Audubon* V. 68 (March/April 1966): 63; "Sheppard Thinks State Will Drop Mineral Rights for Guadalupe Park," *San Angelo Standard-Times*, May 28, 1966; John L. Moore, "Uncle Sam Said Consistent," *San Angelo Standard-Times*, June 2, 1966, 1A; Fabry,

These were typical dilemmas in the creation of large national parks after World War II, testimony to the changes in the nation that transpired between the 1900 and mid-century. Nineteenth- and early twentieth-century national parks had been created from public lands that seemed to have no apparent commercial economic value at the time of their creation, "worthless lands" in the misleading phrase of historian Alfred Runte, Jr. Most were located far from population centers and often far from even rural families and their economic operations. Pratt played an important role in changing that comfortable situation — not only in West Texas, but throughout the nation. Modeled on his scientific pursuit of oil and aware of the small cost of leasing mineral rights, a constellation of companies leased mineral rights not only on private land, but also to as much federal land as they could. Proclaiming a national park in the 1960s meant wading through the mire of private ownership and leases; resolving it entailed a level of cost never anticipated by the early twentieth-century officials of the Park Service and the Department of the Interior.[15]

This problem of how to create a national park of the caliber of the rest of the system without the vast unsettled and unclaimed tracts of public land that existed at the inception of the system demanded a range of strategies. Texas, which retained its public domain when it entered the Union in 1846, possessed relatively little federal land and most of that had been purchased from private owners or traded for federal land elsewhere. Even the state owned only a small part of Texas, long a bastion of individualism, leaving no alternative but to acquire private land in the process of creating a national park. Before 1965, no federal mechanism devoted to acquiring such land existed. Only with the establishment of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) in 1964 did the acquisition of private land by government purchase become viable. The result of an Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission (ORRRC) recommendation, the LWCF was a fund to which federal agencies and later, states and cities, could turn for resources to purchase open space for recreation.[16]

In the heady climate of the mid-1960s and with powerful forces lined up in its support, on October 15, 1966, Lyndon Johnson proudly signed the bill that authorized Guadalupe Mountains National Park. Texas joined the other states in the Union that possessed one of the crown jewels of the park system. In the West, only Oklahoma, Nebraska, and Kansas lacked a national park, enunciating the ways in which the acquisition of a national park had moved from being the prerogative of an agency with a clear vision of the category to revealing the strength of a state's position on the political scene. The Guadalupe Mountains bill allowed for land

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Guadalupe Mountains National Park, 46-49; Floyd S. Fierman, *Roots and Boots: From Crypto-Jew in New Spain to Community Leader in the American Southwest* (Hoboken: KTAV Publishing House, 1987), 113-29.

[15] Alfred Runte, Jr., *National Parks: The American Experience* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987) 2nd. ed., 48-64.

[16] Souter and Fairfax, *State Trust Lands*; Foresta, *America's National Parks and Their Keepers*, 172-73.

acquisition for the new park by purchase, donation, or exchange, allocating 4,667 acres specifically for exchange. Mineral rights remained a sticking point. Texaco first lobbied against relinquishing its mineral rights, finally accepting the caveat that mineral rights would return to the company if the Park Service abandoned the lands. The company then turned the gift into a public relations maneuver, using it to remind the people of Texas of the company's contribution in the state. White assisted in the oil company's goals when he announced that "Texaco has again proved itself a good citizen of west Texas, recognizing the great benefits, recreation, tourist trade, and national recreation that will come through (sic) our area as a result" of the proposed Guadalupe Mountains National Park. A ceiling of expenditures for creating the park, $1.8 million for land acquisition and $10.4 million for development, completed the measure.[17] Congress still had to appropriate the funds, an enormous sticking point as inflation began to eat into the health of the economy. The question of the funding to purchase the land remained the obstacle that could create an actual national park with facilities and amenities.[18]

Appropriations became a struggle, circumvented only by Yarborough and his understanding of the LWCF. The acquisition of the Guadalupe Mountains Ranch stood between the park on paper and one visitors could eventually see. In 1967, Congress appropriated $354,000 for Guadalupe Mountains National Park, with $280,000 for land acquisition. This sum allowed for the acquisition of a few small properties. After securing a three-year option on almost 59,000 acres of Hunter's holdings, the Department of the Interior requested the remaining $1,446,000 of the acquisition funds. Of that, the department needed $1.2 million to complete the Hunter transaction; the rest was earmarked for the purchase of other smaller properties. The House Appropriations Subcommittee balked at the expenditure, Director George Hartzog Jr. placed Guadalupe Mountains below development funds for Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore and Assateague Island National Seashore on the agency's list of priority projects. Congress asked for a $6 billion budget cut to defray the growing cost of the Vietnam War and rising inflation. The House subcommittee cut the more than $30 million in NPS land acquisition requests. Only careful maneuvering by Yarborough saved $200,000 for Guadalupe Mountains, essentially a down payment on the Hunter property, to the final bill. Not satisfied, the powerful Texas senator turned to a 1968 amendment to the Land and Water Conservation Act, which permitted the Interior Department to spend LWCF funds with the approval of the Secretary of the Interior and the House and Senate appropriations committees. Yarborough approached Udall, who agreed that the proposed $1.2 million expenditure for the Hunter ranch was a proper use of LWCF money, and both committees supported Udall. Johnson endorsed

[17] Charles H. Callison, "National Outlook," *Audubon* 68 (November/December 1966): 462-63; "The Park System Expands," *National Parks* V. 40 no. 231 (December 1966): 18; Natt N. Dodge, "The New Guadalupe Mountains National Park," *National Parks* V. 41 (February 1967): 4-8; "Texaco Gives Mineral Rights to New Park," *El Paso Times*, November 2, 1967; "Steps Taken to Buy Land," *El Paso Times*, November 3, 1967; Fabry, *Guadalupe Mountains National Park*, 53-55.

[18] Fabry, *Guadalupe Mountains National Park*, 55-56; Dethloff, *The United States and the Global Economy Since 1945*, 95-103.

the measure after the 1968 election, and in September 1969, Congress approved final funding. After the lands had been acquired, Guadalupe Mountains National Park was established by a notice dated September 30, 1972, and placed in the *Federal Register* on October 6, 1972.[19] The formal notice of establishment provided a fitting indicator of the complexities of national park establishment after mid-century.

At slightly more than 77,500 acres, the new park posed many questions. By traditional national park standards, exemplified by the nearly one million acres of the Grand Canyon, the new park seemed small. It shared much with the classic national parks: remote location, untrammeled areas, spectacular scenery, and other attributes, but it did not compare in its claim on the hearts of Americans. Despite its importance in the settlement of the Southwest, despite the surveys and military battles that took place throughout the area, "Guadalupe Mountains" did not resonate as did names such as Yosemite and Yellowstone. Like the people of the nineteenth century, tourists bypassed the region. The new park did not draw people to drive the more than 100 miles of two-lane highway across the salt flats from El Paso or the more than 200 miles from Interstate 40 to the north. Few if any felt that a visit to the Guadalupe Mountains affirmed them as Americans or spoke to their psychic needs. The new park would have to seek a different constituency.

As the expectations of the national park system changed, the questions that could be asked of the new Guadalupe Mountains National Park became broader. The 1960s offered the nation new perspectives about the utility of open space. A constellation of factors contributed, beginning with the abysmal condition of national forest campgrounds and the vast management needs of the national parks during the 1950s and continuing with Outdoor Recreation review panel and Bureau of Recreation efforts to extend recreational opportunities throughout the nation. As riots during the 1960s highlighted the deteriorated condition of urban areas throughout the nation and the traditional boundaries of American culture collapsed under the weight of their own inconsistencies, the need for a more broadly defined park system that offered greater opportunities and that spoke to a far more diverse national heritage eclipsed the traditional distinctions that contributed to the defining of standards for inclusion in the park system. In an era that saw the creation of Golden Gate and Gateway national recreation areas as well as the addition of the Frederick Douglass Home in 1962, the Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site in 1973, and the Women's Rights National Historical Park in 1980, the role of a small remote national park could be difficult to define.[20]

In this context, Guadalupe Mountains became one of the last traditional national parks. Created from outside the system, replete with the values of the turn-of-the-century Conservation movement, and located so far from the main corridors of American travel as to be

[19] Fabry, *Guadalupe Mountains National Park*, 56-57.

[20] Mackintosh, *Shaping the System*, 61, 76-78, 85; Foresta, *America's National Parks and Their Keepers*, 169-222.

a largely *de facto* wilderness, Guadalupe Mountains traced its heritage to earlier generations of national parks. Like Rocky Mountains National Park, it had been preserved for its scenery, and like Grand Tetons National Park, it had been carved from acres of human habitation around it, although without the incredible rancor that marked the Wyoming park. Despite its small size, Guadalupe Mountains National Park offered the kind of respite from the modern world that the conservationists of the early century envisioned as one of the highest goals of the national parks. However, by the 1960s, the public made other demands on the national parks. Along with its peer parks, Redwoods and North Cascades, Guadalupe Mountains faced anomalous status in a changing national scene.

The issue of designated wilderness illustrated the differences in the meaning of national parks as the nation changed and the park system responded. The passage of the Wilderness Act in 1964 required that all roadless areas greater than 5,000 acres under federal control be reviewed for potential designation as wilderness. The United States Forest Service (USFS), the federal land management agency with the greatest acreage of holdings, responded slowly to the new law, regarding wilderness designation as a single use among many, a contradiction of the agency's 1960 policy of multiple use. Forest Service critics charged that even in multiple use, timber cutting came first and all other uses were far behind. The Park Service also perceived wilderness as a strategy to curtail agency prerogatives in land management, and it stalled, avoided, and generally sought to circumvent wilderness advocates. One consequence of this strategy was that the Park Service's public constituency, which by the early 1970s very vocally embraced the goals of the environmental movement, became alienated from the agency. The people who once served as the agency's strongest public voices became its harshest critics, eroding not only public appreciation and understanding of the agency, but in some cases its congressional support as well. In the court of public opinion, with an energized environmental movement, the Park Service had to find new ways to achieve its management goals.[21]

The complicated national conflicts played out in the assessment of Guadalupe Mountains National Park for potential wilderness designation. The situation pitted typical interests against one another, most of which expressed points of view that did not directly coincide with the statutory limitations of wilderness designation. On March 15, 1970, as the master planning process at the park began, representatives of interested groups and organizations met with the Park Service to offer their input into the process of deciding park management goals. Each organization offered its perspective. The Sportsmen's Club sought limited hunting in the parks if a species population problem occurred. Wilderness advocates came from the range of supporters of the movement at that time. Organizations such as the regional chapter of Sierra Club, headquartered in El Paso, and the New Mexico Mountain Club opposed most development within the park. Other federal agencies also offered perspective.

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[21] Harold K. Steen, *The United States Forest Service: A History* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1976); David A. Clary, *Timber and the Forest Service* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1986); Foresta, *America's National Parks and Their Keepers*, 69-70; John C. Freemuth, *Islands Under Siege: National Parks and the Politics of External Threats* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1991).

Clare Cranston of the U.S. Geological Survey called wilderness designation "discrimination of the worst kind … against the bulk of our population." Representing another viewpoint, the Carlsbad Chamber of Commerce advocated development, regarding the new park as an economic gold mine similar to Carlsbad Caverns National Park.[22]

The situation posed a typical problem for the Park Service, replayed in wilderness hearings around the country. Two different kinds of friends of the agency opposed each other, forcing the Park Service to pick between them. In the early 1970s, the Park Service still hewed to its traditional ways. Before 1972, agency officials maintained their allegiance to park management by principle, rather than the bald-faced reaction to political pressure that followed the politicization of the agency in 1972. The question that wilderness hearings asked was simple: which principle? The mission of the Park Service had been bifurcated between preservation and use since the agency's inception. The Mather-Albright legacy of accommodating visitors offered a link to groups such as chambers of commerce and others who stood to benefit from the growth of tourism. The Leopold Report of 1963, with its emphasis on national parks as "vignettes of primitive America," offered a different vision, one similarly devoid of human habitation but based on science. Besides political concerns of constituent support and agency mission, cultural questions also loomed large.[23] Within the agency, the split between the two principles was equally powerful. Talented individuals who would succeed anywhere chose the Park Service because they believed in the integrity of the national parks and the mission of the agency — which depended on what kind of expertise they possessed and on what their division sought to accomplish. Choosing between these polar-opposite goals was both gut-wrenching for the agency and a harbinger of a more difficult future.

Across the country, the sociocultural stance of the late 1960s and early 1970s that opposed all forms of authority combined with the need to comply with the dictates of the Wilderness Act to put the Park Service on the defensive. The agency was compelled to hold public hearings concerning wilderness designation when it wanted to address the question with internal regulations. The hearings typically spiraled out of control, with local residents in most places opposing wilderness as an unnecessary burden on their communities and the regional economies and advocates resoundingly in favor of a proposal to protect nature from greedy humans. Often class dimensions appeared in the process. Proponents of wilderness were typically more affluent than opponents, and they usually possessed higher levels of education. In the 1960s and 1970s, when the question of privilege loomed large in American society, wilderness hearings provided a confusing juxtaposition of the questions that vexed the nation.[24]

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[22] "Preliminary Planning Session, Guadalupe Mountains National Park, March 15, 1970," Guadalupe Mountains National Park, VF Planning Documents 1335; Fabry, *Guadalupe Mountains National Park*, 58.

[23] Sellers, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks*, 214-15; Wayne and Judy Landrum to the Editor, *Carlsbad Current-Argus*, May 21, 1970.

[24] Rothman, *On Rims and Ridges*, 214-215.

The practical disposition of such questions was equally difficult to resolve. Almost any time the agency recommended "no wilderness," at least one vocal segment of the public organized a letter-writing campaign to challenge the agency. Often, the letters had little to do with a statute; they tended to attest to the value of wilderness as an abstract ideal rather than the specific wilderness in question. In this, such missives reflected the times: they argued for a concept over the specifics of any situation.[25] Some in the Park Service, especially younger employees, secretly and sometimes publicly cheered wilderness advocates, but in general, the vocal emphasis on wilderness made accommodating the mainstream public — the large group whose support was essential to the future of the park system — much more difficult. Life in the court of public opinion complicated the circumstances of decision-makers from the top of the agency to the very bottom.

At the new Guadalupe Mountains National Park, the question of wilderness proved much easier to resolve than in many similar instances. The park had clear wilderness dimensions. Much of the central area of the park was high in elevation, difficult to reach, and nearly roadless. The Park Service recognized that the park it created was *de facto* wilderness. Designation seemed to be a small step. The people in the region also recognized the viability of the proposal. Despite the variety of perspectives expressed in a March 1970 meeting, the entire subregion had much greater experience and concomitant dependence on federal projects to recognize the need for a compromise stance. Most of the opposition to wilderness stemmed from the sense that the entire Guadalupe Mountains National Park would be designated a wilderness. In this view, the park could not have facilities, roads, campgrounds, or employee housing. Closer scrutiny revealed that like many national parks, Guadalupe Mountains would have the amenities associated with the park system located in a small area — not incidentally the area that would comprise the overwhelming majority of visitor use — and the rest of the park would remain untrammeled. This illustrated a conundrum for the Park Service. Most visitors rarely left the paved roads and trails. Some never made it beyond the Visitor Center. In most parks, more than 95 percent of visitors stayed within the range of visitor services. In this context, as long as designated wilderness did not include the amenities that locals counted upon to bring visitors to their parks, the designation posed only peripheral problems at Guadalupe Mountains. By the time hearings on the park master plan convened in November 1971, much of the opposition to wilderness dissipated. The *Carlsbad Current-Argus* played an influential role in changing the perceptions of wilderness in the town of Carlsbad, revealing much of the subtlety in the law and showing its readers how the various points of view on wilderness could be reconciled. In October 1971, the Carlsbad Chamber of Commerce announced that it had reversed its position and would support the master plan and the wilderness proposal it contained. By the November 1971 hearings, opposition to wilderness became muted. In October 1972, 46,850 acres, more

[25] National Speleological Society, "A Wilderness Proposal for the Guadalupe Escarpment, New Mexico and Texas," NA, Rocky Mountain Region, RG 79, SW Regional Office, General Administration Files, 1968-1970, D18a, 1968-1970, GUMO.

than 60 percent of park, became a designated wilderness.[26]

The designation of the Guadalupe Mountains wilderness and subsequent designation of 33,125 acres of wilderness at Carlsbad Caverns National Park set a tone for management of the subregion that was often challenged, but usually held firm. The region's remote nature allowed it to be managed in a fashion significantly less accommodating to visitors than many other similar parks closer to large population centers or the heavily traveled interstate highways. Even at Carlsbad Caverns, where visitor accommodation had been the watchword in the main cavern since the days of Jim White, newly discovered caves such as Lechuguilla were held out as wilderness. Even New Cave in Slaughter Canyon was offered as a primitive experience, without the many accouterments most of the traveling public expected. With the exception of places that had been long designed for the most common traveling experience, the rest of southeastern New Mexico and the trans-Pecos would be designed to hold back change, and to allow the kind of vignettes of primitive America recommended by the Leopold Report.

The Lincoln National Forest experienced this new emphasis under a different set of circumstances. Although managed by the United States Forest Service, its lands linked the two national parks, providing public management that assured continuity and balance between the bookends of Guadalupe Mountains and Carlsbad Caverns. Established in 1902 as a result of game hunters who feared creation of a southern New Mexico national park would limit their hunting privileges, the Lincoln National Forest followed a typical pattern for southwestern forests. A management plan in 1931 identified "a permanent timber supply for local settlers" — a very small objective for a national forest — as the primary goal of forest management, and looked askance at the increase in recreational visitors and applications for summer-home permits. Over time, a range of constituencies availed themselves of Lincoln National Forest resources. As the century continued, more and more of those users enjoyed the recreational pursuits that the Forest Service once eschewed.[27] As did a number of other national forests around the West, the Guadalupe District of the Lincoln National Forest imperceptibly became an offshoot of the national parks around it.

One manifestation of the increasing influence of recreation on the larger region was the creation of two designated wilderness areas: Capitan Mountain, established in 1980 and

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[26] *Wilderness Recommendation, Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Texas* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1972); Carlsbad Sportsmen's Club Inc. to Master Planning Team, National Park Service, May 5, 1970, NA, Rocky Mountain Region, RG 79, SW Regional Office, General Administration Files, 1968-1970, D18a, 1968-1970, GUMO; "Nixon Asks Congress Set Guadalupe as Wilderness," *El Paso Times*, n.d., copy in Meador papers, 3.18, Carlsbad Caverns National Park Library; Fabry, *Guadalupe Mountains National Park*, 59.

[27] Robert D. Baker, Robert S. Maxwell, Victor H. Treat, and Henry C. Dethloff, *Timeless Heritage: A History of the Forest Service in the Southwest* (College Station, TX: Intaglio, Inc., 1988),132-40; Dietmar Schneider-Hector, *White Sands: The History of National Monument* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1993), 56, 62, 72.

encompassing 35,822 acres, and White Mountain, at 48,873 acres, first authorized in 1964 and expanded in 1980. As a result of its enormous land base and the obvious threat that wilderness designation posed to activities such as timber-cutting, the Forest Service resisted the implementation of the Wilderness Act with more vigor than any other federal agency, but again the situation in southeastern New Mexico and the trans-Pecos did not easily fit within agency categories. Its history as a region passed over made accommodation of new ideas and management practices less controversial than elsewhere. In a national forest established to accommodate hunters, where timber-cutting had always been a small-scale endeavor in comparison especially to the larger operations of the Pacific Northwest, the designation of wilderness came as no surprise. It did not threaten the usual commercial interests that played such a dominant role in determining Forest Service policy.[28]

Nor did the rancor that often marked situations where geography, mission, and constituency overlapped mar relations in the Guadalupe Mountains between the Park Service and the Forest Service. Instead, federal officials found that their goals and projects typically fit together nicely, allowing for a cross-agency camaraderie that was far different from the tension that marked the first half of the century elsewhere in the West. Especially as recreational use of the Lincoln National Forest increased, the two agencies shared similar responsibilities and could utilize each other's experience, personnel, and resources in a range of endeavors. On occasion, such as a 1979 report from Superintendent Donald Dayton that proposed linking the two parks by transferring the Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service land between the two parks and the Park Service, the different agencies challenged each other, but usually over issues of mission and constituency. The circumstances created no less than cordial and often warm relations that presaged the future of federal management elsewhere in the West.[29]

Cordial relations did not always foretell agreement, as showed by the situation that developed on the Guadalupe Escarpment during the process of studying the Lincoln National Forest for wilderness status. A 22,800-acre portion of southern Lincoln National Forest, the escarpment had been recommended as wilderness in President Jimmy Carter's proposed "National Heritage Trust" in 1977. The Forest Service concurred during the Roadless Area Review and Evaluation (RARE) II process, in which the agency divided its holding into three categories: lands suitable for wilderness, not suited for wilderness, and in need of further study. The generally negative public response to the RARE II process was muted in the trans-Pecos.

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[28] "December Hearing to View Plans for Forest," *Carlsbad Current-Argus*, November 18, 1971; "Guadalupe Hearing Saturday," *Carlsbad Current-Argus*, November 28, 1971; "Guadalupe Forest Proposals Aired on Saturday," *Carlsbad Current-Argus*, December 3, 1971; Clary, *Timber and the Forest Service*, 91.

[29] R. E. Latimore, "Report on Functional Inspection -Wildlife and Range Management, Lincoln National Forest, December 2-3, 1957 & February 10-14, 1958," USFS 69 a 821, 1440 Inspection, GFI, Range and Wildlife, 1926-58, Lincoln National Forest; William D. Hurst to Luther Peterson, September 30, 1966; Fred H. Kennedy to Hon. Joseph M. Montoya, July 30, 1964, USFS 3432821, 7700, Transportation System, General FY 1967-1970. Superintendent, Carlsbad Caverns and Guadalupe Mountains to Regional Director, Southwest Region, September 17, 1979, Carlsbad Caverns National Park, L1419.

In May 1980, the Forest Service changed its policies, initiating a proposal to explore the escarpment for oil and gas reserves. The foresters kept the study secret until the 1980 election. In its aftermath, both New Mexico senators — Pete V. Domenici and Harrison R. Schmitt — supported opening the area for exploration, as did New Mexico Governor Bruce King. A battle between extractive industries and the environmental movement took shape.[30]

Within this formulation lay an ongoing series of conflicts that spoke to the core of the dichotomy between extractive economic users and their government counterparts. The Guadalupe Mountains offered great potential for oil and gas development — BLM studies repeatedly showed that the region could produce a range of minerals for market.[31] With the establishment of the national park, the lands also became part of an enormous complex that spoke to the needs of recreational users, one dimension of the many tourists who frequented the area. The situation on the escarpment was a classic conundrum. Not only did two powerful public constituencies grapple, but the controversy pitted two federal agencies, the Park Service and the Forest Service, against each other. Each agency enjoyed the support of specific segments of the public. The essence of the issue boiled down to, in the words of *El Paso Times* staff writer John Stark, "beauty or oil." Extractive industries believed the potential of the region to yield energy resources during an era when energy costs were skyrocketing and U.S. dependence on foreign reserves made the nation vulnerable was paramount. Conservationists and those who made their living in the tourist industry saw oil and gas drilling as a threat to their livelihood, the sort of activity that would ruin the region for the recreational travel that had become an important part of its economy. Even typically conservative segments supported recreational use; *Field and Stream* magazine, not known for its support of wilderness, offered an article extolling the virtues of backpacking in the Guadalupes. The situation offered an incommensurable comparison, a comparison between figurative apples and oranges, of the sort that dogged land and natural resource issues. In the United States, public opinion and the political process provided the only resolution to such questions.[32]

Some lined up on the issue in surprising ways. The *Carlsbad Current-Argus*, long a champion of industrial development of almost any sort for the region, offered an editorial that

[30] "Heritage Trust Plan May Affect Guadalupes," *El Paso Herald-Post*, May 24, 1977; "McKittrick Canyon to be Battleground," *Lubbock Avalanche-Journal*, November 11, 1980; "Should Guadalupes Be Opened to Drilling?" *Carlsbad Current-Argus*, November 18, 1980; Clary, *Timber and Forest Service*, 175-77.

[31] Bureau of Mines, "Mineral Investigation of a Part of the Brokeoff Mountains (NM-030-112) Wilderness Study Area, Otero County, New Mexico, and the Lonesome Ridge (NM-060-801) and a Part of the Devil's Den NM-060-0145) Wilderness Study Areas, Eddy County, New Mexico," (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Mines, 1987), MLA 43-87.

[32] Steve Netherby, "Backpacking the Guadalupes," V. 80 no. 3 (July 1975): 98-101; John Stark, "Guadalupes: Oil or Beauty," *El Paso Times*, November 18, 1980; Rothman, *On Rims and Ridges*.

surprised longtime observers. Although strongly asserting the need for energy independence over the preservation of aesthetic beauty or unique ecology, the editorial expressed doubt that the choice was so distinct. "It would seem to us," the piece concluded, "that our aggressive quest for resources can start in the less environmentally desirable areas. Until that is accomplished, and until we have exhausted alternative sources of energy, we think the environmentalists have a solid argument when they say 'hands off the Guadalupes.'" This bold stand reflected the growing importance of the tourism and the service economy throughout southeastern New Mexico and the trans-Pecos. It also provided a powerful reason why 1980 ended without the passage of congressional legislation to allow gas and oil exploration on the Guadalupe Escarpment and why the area was included in a study area — the Forest Service's "undetermined" category — with a final decision expected by 1986. BLM testing revealed little oil on the escarpment and changes in the national economic picture, especially the marked decline in oil prices in 1985, made moot questions of oil exploration on the escarpment. Early in 1998, the escarpment remained a wilderness study area.[33]

The wilderness question allowed an opportunity to highlight the economic importance of tourism. The Park Service released data showing its effect in the area; in 1981, the total expenditures in the area from visitors to the two national parks reached almost $45 million; construction and other projects at the parks added another $2,250,500, and payments in lieu of taxes to Eddy County, New Mexico, and Culberson and Hudspeth counties in Texas, also topped $1 million.[34] Advocates of wilderness could use such data to show that tourism produced almost as much revenue as did extractive industries.

The battle for the Guadalupe Escarpment showed how thoroughly the Park Service was committed to a series of conceptions about Carlsbad Caverns and the Guadalupe Mountains. If the agency had its way, as much of the two parks as possible would remain untrammeled — with or without wilderness designation, providing an economic and aesthetic anchor in the region. The two parks would also be managed as part of a larger whole — "ecosystem management" would come into vogue to describe such practices later in the 1980s — adding to the conception of the Guadalupe Mountains as the one of the last traditional national parks in the continental forty-eight states. In the trans-Pecos, the Park Service would maintain the values of its founders.

Since its inception, the management of Guadalupe Mountains provided an illustration of this goal. From the birth of the idea of a national park in the 1930s, a skyline drive from the Guadalupe Mountains through the Lincoln National Forest to Carlsbad Caverns had been seriously considered. The initial Guadalupe Mountains master plan included a tramway that was

[33] "Mountain Oil: Drill or Not?" *Carlsbad Current-Argus*, November 23, 1980; John Stark, "Oil Search Threatens Guadalupes," *El Paso Times*, November 30, 1980; Mike Baca, interview by Hal Rothman, January 8, 1998.

[34] National Park Service, "Importance of Carlsbad Caverns and Guadalupe Mountains National Parks to Area Economy Told," News Release, March 19, 1982, Carlsbad Caverns National Park Library.

to run to the top of Guadalupe Peak from Pine Springs. The view from the top of Guadalupe Peak would command the entire trans-Pecos, allowing glimpses of Mexico to the distant south, metropolitan El Paso to the west, and as far as the eye could see across the *llanos* of west Texas to the east. From the peak, those visitors who wished could enter the designated wilderness. The tramway had begun as an extension of the idea of the parkway, an idea with great credence during MISSION 66 and Conrad L. Wirth's tenure as director. By the time master planning hearings took place in 1970, the parkway had become a tramway to the top of Guadalupe Peak.[35] Such a project would compromise a large section of the park from the point of view of the Leopold Report, making not only a distant and difficult peak easily accessible, but affecting the visual aesthetics of the peak as well. Some would regard the view as diminished as a result of the tram line up its side. Despite the move toward environmental science, consideration of the tramway revealed that the Park Service retained strong tendencies toward visitor accommodation.

Nor was the tramway proposed for Guadalupe Mountains unique. During the late 1960s and 1970s, the Park Service seemed infatuated with such conveyances, partly to accommodate sedentary visitors and also to reduce traffic, air pollution, and other symptoms of the impact of growing demand from park visitors. The motivation partially stemmed from the desire to mute charges of elitism; the national parks had always been far from urban areas and hard to reach for many. Even as the two-week vacation automobile trip to the national parks became the standard family summer vacation, the parks still retained an exclusive tinge. Spending much time off the beaten track required time or money and usually both. During the 1960s, those who had been previously left out demanded a share of this visible bounty of American society. With greater wealth and leisure time at their disposal, middle and lower-middle class Americans wanted to see more of their national parks. They did not necessarily subscribe to the value system that equated difficulty of access with authenticity. What had to be addressed was the appropriate venue for tramways and other conveyances. If they conveyed people to places that were otherwise difficult to reach, they ran the risk, in the view of the time, of devaluing experience by making it more common. With proposals for tramways under study at parks as diverse as Olympic, North Cascades, Yosemite, and Mesa Verde, no single device asked the Park Service to choose between its many obligations as completely as did any proposal for a tramway.

In an era when the agency increasingly responded to vocal public constituencies, tramways fell victim to the loud complaints of newly energized environmentalists. At Bandelier National Monument in northern New Mexico, a proposal for a similar tramway into what later became a designated wilderness inspired much public ire; elsewhere across the nation, similar

[35] Heald, "A Guadalupe Mountains National Park," 6; *Master Plan, Guadalupe Mountains National Park* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1976); John A. McComb to Friends of Guadalupe Mountains National Park, October 30, 1974, Guadalupe Mountains National Park Library, VF 38, Planning Documents.

planning objectives were discarded as inappropriate, largely as a result of public antipathy. Pages and pages of critical letters in environmental impact statement documents were persuasive when they spoke with one voice.[36] The demands of one segment of the public limited the opportunities to reach the most typical travelers.

At Guadalupe Mountains National Park, the tramway became a political obstacle. As it often did, the Park Service initially favored construction; even the Section 106 compliance report — the mandatory evaluation of the impact of the tramway on historical and cultural resources required by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 — suggested the tramway would have no serious impact. The National Parks and Conservation Association vehemently disagreed, leading a chorus of opposition. The Sierra Club and other environmental organizations followed. John A. McComb, the Southwest representative of the Sierra Club, lobbied against the tramway, and found much support. "The nation would live to regret a tramway in Guadalupe Mountains National Park," one opponent wrote McComb in a widely shared sentiment. For the Park Service, the situation seemed another of the many cases that could pit the agency against its most vocal former friends. In 1975, with inflation and rising oil prices denting the prosperity that marked the first quarter-century following World War II, the Department of the Interior embarked on a campaign to control costs. Unofficially, the tramway fell victim to this economic concern. Rep. Richard White of El Paso, who had been one of the important congressional advocates of the park, strongly favored the tramway, telling Park Superintendent Dayton that without it he would not support designated wilderness. Without White's support, the park stood little chance of receiving a designated wilderness. Caught between environmentalists and the region's congressional delegate, the Park Service faced a situation in which success meant that at least one constituency — and probably more — was likely to be unhappy.[37]

The solution required finesse, a quality that Park Service officials always needed to bring disparate constituencies together in support of agency goals. Dayton recognized the conundrum. He told other Park Service officials that he knew that the tramway was controversial, but "we don't have much choice if the public wants to see it." The solution came in the form of a survey, administered to visitors at both Carlsbad Caverns and Guadalupe Mountains. The survey offered five choices, all of which included a visitor center and typical amenities, but each of which offered a different means to reach the interior of the park. When

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[36] Foresta, *America's National Parks and Their Keepers*, 68-72; Rothman, *On Rims and Ridges*, 265-75.

[37] Rex E. Gerald, "Evaluation of the Impact on Cultural and Historical Resources of a Tramway and of Planned Facilities Development in Specific Areas of Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Texas," June 1973, Guadalupe Mountains Library, VF 42, Planning Documents; John A. McComb to Friends of Guadalupe Mountains National Park, October 30, 1974, Clifton R. Merritt to John McComb, November 15, 1974, Guadalupe Mountains Library, VF 38, Planning Documents; "Guadalupe: Easy Access vs. Protection," *National Parks and Conservation Magazine* V. 50 no. 3 (March 1976):22; Fabry, *Guadalupe Mountains National Park*, 87-92.

the results were announced, slightly more respondents chose foot and horse trails than chose the tramway. The only other option that drew significant support was a shuttle bus. By the end of November 1975 the Park Service could truthfully assert that the tramway did not have overwhelming support among park visitors. They clearly craved something different from Guadalupe Mountains National Park, more in line with the first generation of national parks rather than with the ski areas and their gondolas that pervaded the American West. The lack of enthusiasm persuaded White to reconsider his position. The tramway at Guadalupe Mountains National Park remained a possibility, but its chances dimmed greatly.[38]

After the decline in support of the tramway, the Park Service's commitment at Guadalupe Mountains National Park shifted strongly toward creating a park that mirrored the large natural areas that had long been regarded as the crown jewels of the system. In part, the moment determined this choice. At no time in U.S. history than the fifteen years following passage of the Wilderness Act did greater numbers of Americans vocally embrace the concept of preserving wild nature. In a culture labeled as plastic in the worse sense of the word, pristine nature — no matter how many times it had been altered by humans — promised a kind of authenticity that television could not provide. Nature spoke to more than national roots and experiences, to the conquest of a continent and the self-applied approbation "nature's nation." It reflected a primal need, many believed, a basic human instinct to be free of the constraints of civilization, in the thinking of the time.

For the Park Service, this offered a license to address one of its more complicated management problems, the question of the evidence of modern people within the park system. Since the nineteenth century, national parks had been formed from places that humans inhabited but had been reconceived as being devoid of people. Native Americans disappeared from national parks such as Yosemite and Glacier, only reacquiring even basic rights to use the parks in an historic fashion after the passage of the American Indian Religious Freedom Act in 1977. From the Great Smoky Mountains to Redwoods National Park, the agency removed any vestiges of historic activity in a process that could often inspire local opposition, antipathy, and in some rare instances, outright resistance by any means available. The agency policy in such situations — that sometimes the few had to give up something of value for the good of the many — sounded archaic by the time Guadalupe Mountains National Park was established in 1972.[39]

This question created management problems for the new park. Human habitation in the Guadalupe Mountains had been an important part of the story of the region, but the park had been proclaimed more for its scenic and natural values. A range of historic structures existed in the park, all significant in local and regional history, but most — like the region itself — were

[38] Superintendent, Carlsbad Caverns and Guadalupe Mountains, to Regional Director, Southwest Region, January 7, 1975, W3815-Proposed Legislation, Guadalupe Mountains National Park; Fabry, *Guadalupe Mountains National Park*, 94-95.

[39] Mark D. Spence, *Environmental History*, *Pacific Historical Review*; interview with David Clary.

peripheral to the national story. The situation forced different parts of the mission of Park Service against each other once again at the same time it threw together the different strands of federal statute and policy. Preserving the historic past was positioned against maintaining vignettes of primitive America while the goals of Section 106 juxtaposed against the idea of pristine nature embodied in the Wilderness Act. The decisions reached revealed much about the direction of the agency and plans for Guadalupe Mountains National Park.

Addressing concerns about most of the structures and historic remains provoked little controversy. The remains of the Pinery, the Butterfield Overland Mail station — the most accessible historic remnants in the park, was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1975. Park Service archaeologists preserved it by realigning and remortaring deteriorating walls. Other historic resources — the Pratt Stone Cabin at the junction of North and South McKittrick canyons, the Williams ranch on the west side of the park near the mouth of Bone Canyon, and the Ship of the Desert — were either closed to the public or so difficult to reach that few attempted the trip. The Park Service adapted historic structures as well. The Frijole Ranch House, listed on the National Register, housed Ranger Roger Reisch and later the Frijoles Ranger Division. Despite the lack of historic structures reports for all the properties except the Pinery, the Park Service ably managed most historic structures.[40]

The Pine Springs Cafe, long a staple along Highway 62/180, illustrated the complexity of managing resources and the fluidity of NPS goals at Guadalupe Mountains National Park. The Pine Springs Cafe belonged to the Glovers, who had first established the Pine Springs Station in the late 1920s. At its peak, the homestead contained guest houses and a filling station. A school stood nearby. In its heyday, a dance hall built in 1930 to accommodate Standard Oil Company workers on the pipeline from Wink to El Paso graced the property. After 1945 the property declined in significance, but it remained a regional institution of considerable repute. People counted on being able to stop at Pine Springs, have coffee and catch up on regional news.[41]

Pine Springs posed an obstacle to Park Service goals even before the creation of the park. Walter and Bertha Glovers were senior citizens who had lived their lives outside the range of government influence. They did not want interference in any way. They expected their property to be left out of the park, but in the end it was included, as the Park Service feared having land so close to the park's main artery that the agency could not control. The Glovers balked at any serious negotiation, at one point asking for $1 million for their dilapidated buildings that appraised in the range of fifty thousand dollars. In the end, rather than face condemnation and eminent domain proceedings, the Glovers settled for fifty-five thousand dollars and a lifetime estate, the right to continue to occupy the property until the surviving

[40] Fabry, *Guadalupe Mountains National Park*, 167-90.

[41] Nancy Adele Kenmotsu, "Survey in the McKittrick Canyon Watershed, Guadalupe Mountain National Park, Culberson County, Texas," (Austin, TX: Department of Antiquities Protection, Texas Historical Commission, 1993), 21-27.

spouse died. Walter Glover died in 1973 at the age of ninety-four; when Bertha Glover died in August 1982 at the age of eighty-nine, the Park Service fully expected to take control of the property. In a meeting shortly after Mrs. Glover's death, Mary Glover Hinson, the Glovers' only daughter who had been residing with her parents, indicated that she thought she could complete family affairs by the end of the calendar year and then leave. As late as October 1982, the Park Service made plans to administer the property.[42]

Mary Hinson's situation suddenly attracted national attention and became a public relations disaster for the Park Service. Although the *El Paso Times* noted Hinson's impending closure earlier, when *USA Today* carried the story on October 26, 1982, the story began to attract national attention. Television networks NBC and ABC picked up the story, and an outcry of sympathy arose for Hinson. U.S. Senator Lloyd Bentsen of Texas requested an extension for Hinson, White added his voice to the fray, and Secretary of the Interior James Watt, an advocate of privatizing park services, expressed his concern.[43] The news stories incorrectly used the word "eviction" to describe the end of the Glovers' life estate, and the Park Service came off poorly in the press. Especially during the administration of Ronald Reagan, government agencies that attempted any kind of initiative found themselves without the support of the administration and castigated by the media.

The Pine Springs saga dragged on for another decade. Hinson used public support and the threat of congressional intervention to retain short-term extensions until 1987, when the Park Service made a genuine attempt to oust her. In this case, the agency was reversed by another Reagan-era Secretary of the Interior, the erratic Donald Hodel — the man who advocated draining O'Shaughnessey Lake behind the Hetch-Hetchy Dam and once told reporters that a hat and sunglasses — what he called a personal protection system — were the best solution to the breakdown of the ozone layer — granted Hinson a five-year permit. In the early 1990s, the agency again marshaled its forces, and this time it finally ousted Mary Hinson and leveled the Glover structures in 1993. Even a decade after the end of the life estate, the situation could spur controversy. The Associated Press wire story used the word "intimidating" to describe NPS behavior, and Goodi Sanders, who ran the cafe for Hinson since the late 1980s, told reporters: "if it was just me, I'd go to court in a heartbeat. But I don't think Mary's heart could stand it."[44] The wilderness ethic held firm at Guadalupe Mountains National Park, but at a public relations and even a political cost that gave agency administrators pause. While the Park Service could gently exercise legitimate authority granted by the owners of a piece of property, the court of public opinion could still chastise the agency. The agency moved carefully, especially with the

[42] Fabry, *Guadalupe Mountains National Park*, 72-76, 190.

[43] Fabry, *Guadalupe Mountains National Park*, 192-93.

[44] "Cafe Reluctantly Closes in Mountain Park," *El Paso Times*, January 3, 1993; Rothman, *The Greening of a Nation*.

1994 election of a Republican majority in the House of Representatives and a growing anti-government tenor across the nation.

Despite this anti-federal backlash, federal influence remained powerful if not dominant in southeastern New Mexico and the trans-Pecos. The establishment of Guadalupe Mountains National Park created a chain of federal holdings including a large stretch of the Lincoln National Forest that stretched from Carlsbad Caverns National Park to Guadalupe Mountains National Park. In a region with a now marginal private economy, the growing federal presence gained in significance as national park visitors — both those who simply toured the parks and stopped in the visitor centers, and those who spelunked caves and climbed mountains — became an increasingly important part of the regional economy.

This situation and the growing significance of WIPP in the regional economy asked once again the most dramatic question of this long overlooked and still largely marginal region: what could it offer U.S. society? Much of the region seemed at odds with the prevailing currents of American life, operating on a different set of premises than did the rest of the nation. As the country, especially the West, sought to wean itself from federal spending, the trans-Pecos seemed to relish in its federal embrace.